

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE MANAGEMENT

5181

(No. 5; January 1995)

CDF administers land management projects and responds to emergencies in wildland areas statewide. Among the many values present within these areas are cultural resources (or archaeological and historical resources) which include prehistoric and historic artifacts and features. These resources, which typically include physical evidence of past human activity 50 years of age and older, should be managed and dealt with in a professional and law-abiding manner.

Existing laws provide protection to cultural resources on private, state, and federal lands. The national pastime of "arrowhead collecting" as a form of recreation is now illegal. Unauthorized individuals digging in a prehistoric site are subject to felony convictions and penalties that include incarceration, fines, and the forfeiture of vehicles, tools, and artifact collections. Government employees are subject to these regulations and, in some cases, have lost their jobs as a result of infractions.

In response to the existing rules, regulations, and laws, CDF routinely reviews certain projects for cultural resources. An archaeological review is mandatory for all timber harvesting plans, controlled burn projects, and forest improvement (tree planting) projects. Cultural resources identified during project review are documented, marked with flagging tape, and protected during project implementation. With rare exception are CDF or other project personnel permitted to collect artifacts from these sites. These exceptions are when artifact collections are authorized by or made by a CDF archaeologist, as part of the inventory, recording, and impact assessment required by law.

Other CDF projects that involve ground disturbing activities such as fire station and conservation camp repair and maintenance, fuel break construction, and various inmate labor projects sometimes do not receive formal archaeological review. Cultural resources discovered during these projects are nonetheless protected by law and should be reported immediately to the CDF Regional Archaeologist (or Archaeological Program Manager) and the local land manager (BLM, USFS, NPS, etc.). Project activities in the discovery location should cease until the situation has been evaluated and management recommendations developed. No artifacts are to be collected except when conducted by a CDF Archaeologist as noted above.

The suppression of wildland fires on private land typically takes place without formal archaeological review. While such a review is not legally required on private land in emergency situations, it is prudent to protect California's nonrenewable cultural resources whenever possible. Archaeological sites found during fire suppression or rehabilitation activities should be flagged for avoidance wherever possible and reported to the CDF regional archeologist and any appropriate agency personnel.

On rare occasions, human remains are encountered during project implementation. Discoveries of this type must be reported to the local county coroner immediately. If the coroner determines that the remains are archaeological in origin, he or she will contact the Native American Heritage Commission to coordinate and develop a site management plan. The CDF Regional Archaeologist and the local land manager should also be notified whenever such a discovery is made.

The [Cultural Resource Types](#) contains a listing of common cultural resource types. The discovery of any of these items may indicate an archaeological site. During the suppression of wildfires, each site should be protected to the extent possible and later reported. In nonemergency situations the discovery area should be left undisturbed and the findings reported to the appropriate personnel.

FORMS AND/OR FORMS SAMPLES: RETURN TO ISSUANCE HOME PAGE FOR FORMS/FORMS SAMPLES SITE LINK.

[\(See next section\)](#)

[\(See Table of Contents\)](#)